



Executive Officer's Statement
Victim Compensation and
Government Claims Board
September 15, 2005



Hurricane Katrina Disaster Relief Campaign

Governor Schwarzenegger, Controller Steve Westly and the six elected constitutional officers have taken action to give state employees the opportunity to directly assist the victims of Hurricane Katrina through the California State Employees Charitable Campaign. In addition to the many charities already included in the Charitable Campaign, employees may choose to assist the victims of Hurricane Katrina by making a one-time contribution, or contributing a monthly deduction from their paychecks. The United Way has partnered in this effort and agreed to waive administration fees for contributions for disaster relief. Governor Schwarzenegger joined by Cruz Bustamante, Lieutenant Governor, Bill Lockyer, California Attorney General, Steve Westly, California State Controller, John Garamendi, Insurance Commissioner, Bruce McPherson, Secretary of State, Jack O'Connell, Superintendent of Public Instruction, and Phil Angelides, California State Treasurer, sent a letter to state employees providing information about the Hurricane Katrina Disaster Relief Campaign and direction on how to contribute to this effort.

Domestic Violence Awareness

National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, recognized in October, raises awareness about the prevalence and cost of domestic violence, the need for prevention, and the availability of services for victims of abuse. Every October local programs, state coalitions, and national organizations conduct community awareness campaigns, fund-raisers, and special events to educate the public about the problem of domestic violence and its effect on the victims and the community at large.

This past year, the Executive Officer represented the Board by participating in the Attorney General's Task Force on Local Criminal Justice Response to Domestic Violence. The task force examined how local criminal justice systems responded to domestic violence across California. The report, "Keeping the Promise: Victim Safety and Batterer Accountability," was released in July 2005.

To increase public awareness about the Victim Compensation Program, the new bilingual poster, which features the slogan "Violence Hurts Everyone...We Can Help" will be distributed to domestic violence shelters and rape crisis centers throughout the state. The Victim Compensation Program can help domestic violence victims with relocation assistance, emergency awards, mental health services, home security, and medical expenses.

Application Review Team Expanded

In August, the Victim Compensation Program completed the formation of the Application Review Team (ART) by consolidating remaining support staff from the regional teams. ART was initially formed in November to pilot whether a single unit could more efficiently receive and begin the processing of applications and bills. The unit screens applications and bills for completeness and enters them into our computer system. The unit also requests necessary verification information, including crime reports, up front so claims processing staff has needed information when they begin final processing. This process has proven to be successful. As a result of the

ART process, claims are now more easily and quickly processed. Final consolidation of all intake activities in ART will mean that all teams in the program will experience these benefits.

Federal Compensation Program for Victims of International Terrorism

The Federal Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) recently released draft regulations to implement an International Terrorism Victim Expense Reimbursement Program. In essence, the regulation will establish a federally run victim compensation program for American citizens and foreign employees of the U. S. Government who are victims of terrorism abroad. As proposed, this program will include reimbursement of medical, mental health, funeral burial, and some property loss and miscellaneous expenses. It will not however, cover lost wages nor will it cover pain and suffering.

Board staff, in conjunction with the National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards, will be reviewing the proposed regulations to determine their impact on California and prepare comments for OVC, if needed.

Board Updates

Victim Compensation Advisory Committee Meeting

The Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board will host its next quarterly Victim Compensation Advisory Committee meeting at the Board's Sacramento office on Wednesday, September 21, 2005. The 12-member advisory committee is composed of representatives from state agencies and other entities serving victims.

Coordinating Council Award

The Board would like to thank the California Victim Witness Coordinating Council for the beautiful award commemorating the Board's 40 years of serving victims. We would like to acknowledge the partnerships that we have formed with the victim witness centers throughout the state and acknowledge the good work that has come as a result of positive collaborations with the centers, their leadership and their dedicated staff persons. The Board looks forward to a future full of achievements on behalf of victim services that we will realize as a result of this very positive Board/Victim Witness Center partnership.